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ABSTRACT

Trends and projections for higher education are identified. Increased public concern about the purposes and standards of higher education has followed the publication of four major publications about higher education in the United States. Changing demographics are projected for 1983-1993, including fewer 18- to 22-year-olds, decreased full-time and increased part-time enrollments, and a decrease in senior instructional staff. It is suggested that colleges will react to public concern and changing demographics in the following ways: evaluation of the mission of higher education, increased competition for students, an emphasis on student competencies, and increased awareness of competing education systems. These general trends will affect students, administrators, and faculty. Student trends concerning minority access, student debt, foreign students, and part-time students are addressed, along with management trends concerning planning, financing, marketing, student retention, and institutional leadership. Teacher and curriculum trends concern: minority and women employment, collective bargaining, tenure and the graying professoriate, migrant faculty, faculty workload, occupational versus liberal arts/general education, educational delivery systems, high technology, and response to corporate training/degree programs. (SW)

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EMERGING TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Emerging Trends in Higher Education

Not since the late 1950's when Russia launched Sputnik has so much public attention and concern been focused on higher education. Some of these concerns have been articulated in four major publications that have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses, promises and problems of U.S. collegiate institutions. These reports are:

Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education. (Final Report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education sponsored by the National Institute of Education, 1984, ERIC ED 246 833);

To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education. (William J. Bennett, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984, ERIC ED 247 880);

Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. (Association of American Colleges' Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees, 1985, ERIC ED 251 059);

Higher Education and the American Resurgence. (Frank Newman, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton University Press, 1985, ERIC HE 018 884).

These reports have aroused national debate over the purpose, standards, and future of American higher education. The concerns raised are based on specific conditions that have been developing over the past decade and the changing demographics projected for the next.

Demographic Trends. While four-year colleges and universities grew from 6.4 million students in 1970 to 7.7 million in 1983, a 10 percent drop is projected by 1993 to just under 7 million. This is primarily due to 10 percent fewer 18- to 22-year-olds, the traditional college age. Other significant changes projected for the decade of 1983-1993 are:

Women: Approximately 54 percent of all college students will be female.

Part-time Students: Full-time enrollmenet will fall by 17 percent and part-timers will rise by 8 percent to more than 5.6 million students.

Older Students: Students aged 25 and older will increase by 13 percent to 5.7 million.

Upper Level Instructors: The number of senior instructional staff will fall from 702,000 to 635,000--a decrease of 10 percent.

General Trends. Institutions will react to public concern and changing demographics in the following ways:

The Evaluation of the Mission of Higher Education: There will be continuing debate concerning the purpose of higher education and how academic excellence is measured.

Increased Competition for Students: Because there will be fewer eligible students, except for the most distinguished, institutions will compete with each other for new students. The smaller traditional applicant pool will force colleges and universities to demonstrate their attractiveness to students by emphasizing such areas as quality of education, location of the institution, and success in placing students in graduate schools.

Emphasis on Student Competencies: The role that higher education institutions should have in educating underprepared students will continue to be debated. Is a college's worth or quality determined by its entrance or its exit requirements? In reaching for "excellence," many institutions are raising their admissions standards. However, others support the notion of "value-added" education (the degree to which a student has been educated by the time of graduation) or a national competency test prior to graduation. Although the idea that remedial education is a secondary school and not collegiate responsibility is

politically acceptable, it may in the long run be costly to the nation if it excludes large numbers of minority students.

Increased Awareness of Competing Education Systems: The traditional collegiate higher education sector will also compete with other postsecondary systems such as proprietary schools and industrial/corporate programs. The recent emphasis on "corporate colleges" indicates there are some areas of postsecondary education that the traditional sector may not be successfully addressing.

These general trends will affect specific student, faculty, and administrator areas described below.

Student Trends. Issues of minority access, student debt, foreign students, and part-time students must be addressed.

Minority Access: Minority groups, especially Spanish-speaking students, are greatly increasing on campuses. However, they could be shut out of higher education institutions as colleges become more expensive, student aid becomes more limited, and enrollments are based on previous academic achievement.

Increased Student Debt: As state and federal support for higher education decrease and tuition and other educational costs increase, many students will be either financially cut off from attending higher education or graduate with a larger education debt. This is especially true for students who attend graduate professional programs. The implications of this trend are just being studied, but preliminary findings suggest a negative impact on society--not just on the general economy, but also in terms of decreased altrusium among such professionals as doctors and lawyers, who would be more and more tempted to go into lucrative specialities (e.g., corporate tax law rather than legal aid) in order to pay off education loans.

Foreign Students: As institutions look for new clienteles, there will be more international students on campus. By 1990 one in four graduate students and one in 10 undergraduate students will be foreign. This situation will add a new level of institutional problems, related to cultural and language adjustment.

Part-Time Students: As the college costs rise as a percent of disposable income, there will be a greater tendency for students to attend college on a part-time basis. This is also true of adults who are developing skills for a second career or reentering the workforce. Part-time adult students have specific needs and social and family pressures that will

force changes in regulations and education delivery systems. (For example, there will be a greater need for child care, counseling, and late afternoon and evening courses.)

Management Trends. Issues in planning, financing, marketing, student retention, and institutional leadership are areas of concern.

Planning: Increased demands for accountability and limitations of restricted resources will exert pressure to manage institutions more effectively and efficiently. Increasingly, the knowledge, skills and research developed by business schools will be called upon by the institution. This will include attention to strategic planning, more sophisticated accounting and recordkeeping, better plant management, and long-range investment.

Financing: Institutional revenue will be a major concern of management. Expenses will continue to rise faster than the general cost of living, primarily due to faculty salaries catching up with the general population and the costs of building maintenance and rehabilitation after years of neglect.

If federal student financial aid is reduced, tuition increases may not be viable as a way to finance an institution. Other sources of income will have to be explored.

Marketing: In order to maintain enrollments, college and universities will have to become more sophisticated in the art of marketing. The purpose of marketing will be to create a greater demand for the institution, not only by attracting new students, but also by making the general public aware of available services and activities.

Student Retention: To maintain student enrollments there will be a greater attention to "student fit" to keep students from dropping out or transferring.

Leadership: As management skills maintaining financial stability become more important, the traditional process of selecting college administrators from the academic ranks will change. Greater atttention will be directed towards potential academic leaders with proven management or entrepreneurial skills.

Faculty Trends. Institutions will stop growing and some will start to decline, and the number of new faculty hires will decrease dramatically. Since the average faculty age is in the mid to late 40's, and mandatory retirement is now set at 70, faculty will increasingly have this profile: white male, mid 50's to mid 60's, senior professional rank and tenure, and at the highest salary level. The lack of turnover will compound these problems.

Minority and Women Employment: Currently minority and women

are disportionately represented in all ranks and levels in higher education. If institutions stop hiring any new faculty, the likelihood of change in the near future is limited. New employment strategies will have to be developed to overcome this trend.

Collective Bargaining: Historically, unionization has decreased in times of recession. To what degree the decade-long recession in higher education will affect the continued unionization of college campuses has been a subject of great discussion. As positions become less secure, however, anxieties will continue to rise; there is a greater likelihood of strengthened faculty unions. This unionization will have implications for decision-making in both administrative as well as academic areas.

Tenure and the Graying Professoriate: Because of low turnover, a larger percentage of faculty will reach the senior rank and be tenured. However, with pressures for higher academic excellence and general accountability, there will be an increased demand for stricter evaluation of faculty performance. These evaluations threaten the concept of tenure as a protection of academic freedom and a guaranteed right to a permanent faculty position.

Migrant Faculty: Many institutions are establishing a ceiling on the percent of tenured faculty in a program or college. This means there will be a more rigorous evaluation to gain tenure and have a greater chance of faculty being denied tenure. Institutions are also establishing non-tenured faculty positions based on a short term (one- to six-year non-renewable contracts). These practices are forcing many faculty to constantly move from one institution to another. As a faculty member grows older and more senior in rank (and therefore more expensive) it will be harder to find another comparable position within academe. As the academic profession becomes less desirable, it will be harder to attract the best minds.

Faculty Workload: Institutions call for more productivity, and are asking faculty to take on more responsibilities. This includes a larger teaching load, more advisees and more committee work, thus leaving less time for scholarship research and publishing. One consequence is that faculty will find it harder to keep up to date in their areas of expertise.

Curriculum Trends. The national calls for education excellence have several ramifications:

Occupational Versus Liberal Arts/General Education: Various commission reports emphasize the need to return to a core

curriculum that focuses on the liberal arts, including greater concentration on foreign languages and the study of Western civilization. However, more students are attending colleges primarily to gain occupational skills. If changes are made in the basic undergraduate curriculum without adequate consideration of student expectations, there could be new potential for student disharmony and calls for "relevance."

Educational Delivery Systems: With more part-time students, traditional delivery systems will evolve: courses offered during the day will change to late after-noon and evening, weekend, and off-campus classes. Such changes have implications for management, staffing, and quality control.

High Technology: More students are entering higher education with computer skills, forcing institutions to include computers as part of the education process. This will not only put a financial burden on the institution, but will create a need for a great deal of faculty training.

Response to Corporate Training/Degree Programs: The growth of corporate training/degree programs will force colleges and universities to become more sophisticated and to compete or cooperate with the corporate world. Traditional higher education will have to evaluate its general mission, role, and performance.

Changing demographics will clearly have a dramatic effect on American higher education in the next decade. Colleges and universities must face financial, organizational, and personnel issues related to the economic climate, new student clienteles, and competitive faculty slots. Curricular changes may result from public calls for quality and accountability as assessment of student learning continues as a public issue.

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